

Stop Trump! Stop Clinton!! Stop the Madness (and Let Me Get Off)!

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That's the real issue this time," he said. "Beating Nixon. It's hard to even guess how much damage those bastards will do if they get in for another four years."

The argument was familiar, I had even made it myself, here and there, but I was beginning to sense something very depressing about it. How many more of these goddamn elections are we going to have to write off as lame, but "regrettably necessary" holding actions? And how many more of these stinking double-downer sideshows will we have to go through before we can get ourselves straight enough to put together some kind of national election that will give me and the at least 20 million people I tend to agree with a chance to vote *for* something, instead of always being faced with that old familiar choice between the lesser of two evils?

Now with another one of these big bogus showdowns looming down on us, I can already pick up the stench of another bummer. I understand, along with a lot of other people, that the big thing this year is Beating Nixon. But that was also the big thing, as I recall, twelve years ago in 1960 – and as far as I can tell, we've gone from bad to worse to rotten since then, and the outlook is for more of the same.

—Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72*

Another bummer indeed. It's been nearly four and a half decades since His Majesty, Dr. Gonzo, wrote those words...and my oh my has the rot turned putrid, the stench overwhelming.

Were it only the fact that a corporate imperialist sociopath and a raving pseudo-fascist gasbag are competing to become the Murderer-in-Chief, one could simply retreat to the friendly confines of the Hobson's Choice Inn. There, among the carpets and curtains carrying the stains of elections past, one would watch the political circus in

peace while doing the work of organizing against both Tweedle Bum and Tweedle Bummer.

But this time, there's something even more sinister afoot, something far worse than mere cardboard cutouts in formal dress. No, this time it's the pompous arrogance and vacuous prattling of "leftists," "anti-imperialists," and other assorted mental contortionists doing their damndest to browbeat everyone within earshot (eyeshot?) that **THIS TIME** it's important!

"How can you sit aside so smug and allow the fascist Trump to win? You're being irresponsible," they chirp.

"How can you attack Trump and let the Warmongering Witch of the West become President? You know what she'll do," they drone.

And the response to the denizens of both camps remains the same: If you're not opposing both Janus faces of Dillary Crump while working to guillotine the many-headed hydra of the ruling class, then what the hell are you really doing? Oh, right, I forgot – this is all "strategic," it's about avoiding a calamity by accepting a disaster. I'm sure the children of Libya or Muslim-American and Mexican-American immigrants will understand as they are crushed under the bus beneath which they were thrown by a "progressive left" so quick to speak for them.

But perhaps it might be useful for the Left, of which I consider myself a part, to reflect on just what the sort of 'sophisticated' and 'pragmatic' politics of lesser evilism hath wrought: the continued evisceration of the working class by both the red team and blue team of the single ruling party, perpetual war for profit and Empire, an immutable rightward drift that makes Richard Nixon look like Eugene Debs, and a parasitical ruling class of finance capital whose greatest trick has been convincing the people that it doesn't rule them.

And where are the victories? What can we point to as the great breakthrough justifying the tactical vote? [crickets]...[a single tumbleweed rolls along an empty desert landscape]

Have we seen anything but an acceleration of the worst aspects of imperialism and capitalism? The climate is in crisis and we're told by leftist royalty like the great Noam Chomsky that we should [vote for Clinton](#) because she at least recognizes the peril of climate change while Trump wants to put a lump of coal in Pachamama's stockings. But the obvious question then becomes: so what?

So what Clinton pays lip service to the global threat? She was an ardent supporter of the "[All of the above](#)" energy policy of Obama while [promoting fracking around the world](#), taking massive [campaign donations from energy industry lobbyists](#), and tacitly [supporting](#) the construction and expansion of the Keystone XL pipeline until it became politically untenable (thanks in no small part to the Bernie Sanders campaign). And, of course, who could forget the votes she cast in [support for expanded offshore oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico](#), a shameful vote which directly contributed to the Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010.

I suppose the question should be asked of Chomsky: Is a begrudging vote for Hillary to be cast solely on the grounds of her having appropriately progressive and focus-grouped talking points? It seems that's just about the size of it. So then the inevitable follow-up question would be: Why f*cking bother rewarding her for knowing the importance of lying well?

And how about that pesky little World War III problem? I can almost hear the "Oh, don't exaggerate...Hillary doesn't want to start a war with nuclear-armed Russia" cries from the tastemakers of the liberal unintelligentsia. Well, let's allow the Queen of Chaos to speak for herself. In a raving, Strangelovian speech given before the mouth-breathing jingos of the American Legion, Clinton explained:

We need to respond to evolving threats, from states like Russia, China, Iran and North Korea...We need a military that is ready and agile so that it can meet the full range of threats — and operate on short notice across every domain — not just land, sea, air, and space, but also cyber space...You've seen reports — Russia has hacked into a lot of things, China has hacked into a lot of things — Russia even hacked into the Democratic National Committee! Maybe even some state election systems, so we've gotta step up our game...Make sure we are well defended and able to take the fight to those who go after us. As president I will make it clear that we will treat cyberattacks just like any other attack...We will be ready with serious political, economic, and military responses.

Did anyone else feel a shiver run down their spine, as I did? Clinton literally advocates for war with Russia, arguing that a cyberattack which may, or may not, have originated in Russia be treated as an act of war. Nuclear-armed Russia should expect a military response from the United States over allegations of hacking? It's sort of a pot calling the kettle black and trying to smash it with a goddamn sledgehammer kind of situation.

Now, of course, there are plenty of good people on the Left – Adolph Reed, Noam Chomsky, Arun Gupta, and many others – arguing that Clinton is a necessary evil to block Trump from bringing to fruition a full-fledged fascist movement that would have dire ramifications for social justice movements. And there is undeniably an element of truth in that.

However, the wisdom of the logic relies on a false premise: Trump represents an existential threat while Hillary does not. This basic assumption is undeniably flawed as global war with countries like Russia and China is indeed one of the great threats to humanity; this is precisely what Clinton's belligerent foreign policy leads toward. And there was a time when anti-war still was synonymous with Left activism. What happened that we are now told that the pro-war position is necessary in order to stop, er, um, fascism? How far we've fallen.

Trump: The Fascist “Anti-Imperialist”

In the unending search for the most imbecilic political logic, one comes across that rare breed of obtuse ignoramus who suggests that Trump is the anti-imperialist's choice. If that word has any meaning left today – something that is very much open for debate given recent developments – its application to Donald Trump is about as appropriate as referring to Clinton as the anti-fascist's choice.

Trump doesn't mean no more imperial wars; he simply means no more pretending our wars aren't imperial. He's not for ending the wars, but rather fighting them with the nakedly neo-colonial intentions made overt that Clinton would only secretly share over candlelit dinners with Huma Abedin, Madeleine Albright, and Mephistopheles. With people like Walid Phares, Michael Flynn, and Keith Kellogg as [advisers](#), Trump will retain a pro-Israel imperial policy in the Middle East while [advocating for NATO's expanded mission of counter-terrorism](#). Oh, excuse me, Trump wants Denmark to pay “it's fair share” of NATO costs – pardon me while I release to the heavens a flight of doves in his honor.

What anti-imperialist isn't enamored with a candidate who calls for a full [military invasion of Syria and Iraq](#)? And, of course, there's no connection whatever between imperialism, colonialism and white supremacy, right? Trump can spout the most virulently racist filth heard in US politics since George Wallace and Barry Goldwater went on a Tinder date to the Old Ebbitt Grill, and yet these anti-imperial mannequins swear up and down that Trump is an enemy of the Empire. Even his complimentary reach-around to Bibi [Netanyahu](#) isn't enough to shake the cobwebs from the faux anti-imperial noodleheads of the commentariat. Sigh.

And so, where does this leave us on the Left? Everyone wants to bludgeon leftists into supporting Clinton to stop Trump using the familiar cudgel of “necessary evil”, while offering little to no additional direction other than “once the election is over we will...” Yeaahhhh, that's worked out well for us thus far.

Others secretly root for Trump to upset the apple cart and open a space for the Left, conveniently forgetting that the Left remains a fractured and disunited bloc while the fascist right grows in strength and organization every day. And commentators of the Left rush to tell their readers and fellow travelers that THIS or THAT is what they should do.

I've got an idea. How about we take a breath, drink/smoke/snort something nice and strong, close our eyes and listen close to hear the echoes of Dr. Gonzo reverberating off the walls of the Left echo chamber:

“Life has become immeasurably better since I have been forced to stop taking it seriously.”

Or, if that's just too droll:

“In a world of thieves, the only final sin is stupidity.”